

SENATE BILL 2321
By Dixon

AN ACT to amend Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 4, Chapter 3,
Part 18, relative to health issues of the elderly.

BE IT ENACTED BY THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE:

SECTION 1. (a) There is created a task force to identify the major health issues facing people over sixty-five (65) having the greatest impact upon the health and well-being of such individuals, exclusive of issues relating to long-term care.

(b) The task force shall be composed of eleven (11) members to be appointed as follows:

(1) One (1) member of the house health and human resources committee to be appointed by the speaker of the house;

(2) One (1) member of the senate general welfare, health and human resources committee to be appointed by the speaker of the senate;

(3) The chief medical officer of the department of health;

(4) The executive director of the commission on aging, or the executive director's designee;

(5) The commissioner of human services, or the commissioner's designee;

(6) A physician with knowledge of geriatrics; a representative of the American Association of Retired Persons; a representative of a senior citizen agency; a minister;

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and two (2) citizens over sixty-five (65) years of age to be appointed by the commissioner of health.

(c) All appointments shall be made no later than September 1, 1998, to enable the task force to begin its study and file its report within the time established in Section 3.

SECTION 2. The task force shall:

(1) Identify prevention strategies which could affect the health conditions of people over sixty-five (65) and improve the quality of life;

(2) Identify at what age such prevention strategies would have their best potential for improving health; and

(3) Identify problems the elderly experience in getting appropriate treatment for chronic diseases which afflict the elderly.

SECTION 3. The task force shall complete its study and file its final report by January 1, 2000, including any recommendations for necessary legislative action, with the members of the House Health and Human Resources Committee, the Senate General Welfare, Health and Human Resources Committee and the governor. Upon the filing of such report, the task force shall cease to exist.

SECTION 4. Non-legislative members shall serve without compensation but may be reimbursed for travel expenses in accordance with the comprehensive travel regulations promulgated by the commissioner of finance and administration and approved by the attorney general and reporter.

SECTION 5. Tennessee Code Annotated, Title 4, Chapter 3, Part 18, is amended by adding the following language as a new, appropriately designated section:

Section _____. (a) There is created within the department of health, an office of aging.

(b) The duties and responsibilities of such office shall include, but not be limited to:

(1) Providing staff for a period of one (1) year to the task force created pursuant to this act;

(2) Compiling information about health issues and unmet needs of the elderly as well as strategies being used across the nation to address such issues and needs;

(3) Working with other areas of the department of health and other departments and agencies of state government to integrate and enhance services for the elderly;

(4) Providing information to county and regional health councils to make such councils aware of the health needs of elderly residents;

(5) Developing partnerships in an effort to:

(A) Increase awareness of the general population concerning health issues facing the elderly;

(B) Increase awareness of senior citizens about measures they can take to stay as healthy as possible; and

(C) Improve the knowledge of health professionals regarding geriatric preventive and maintenance care.

SECTION 6. This act shall take effect upon becoming a law, the public welfare requiring it.